

CONGRESSMAN LARSON ANNOUNCES \$ 7.2 MILLION GRANT FROM U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR FOR UNITED TECHNOLOGIES EM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 26, 2000

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Larson Also Unveils His Major Federal Economic Assistance Program For Connecticut EAST HARTFORD - U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today announced that Connecticut-based employees of United Technology Companies (UTC): Hamilton Sundstrand, Pratt & Whitney and Sikorsky Aircraft have been authorized a \$7.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to help employees who are affected by UTC's restructuring make the transition to new jobs. A first installment of \$2.7 million will be immediately released.

In a letter dated May 17, Larson and the rest of the Connecticut delegation urged U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman to release the funds, and expressed their strong support for a proposal developed by a newly-created Labor Management Committee (comprised of the unions representing workers at each division) in cooperation with the Employment & Training Institute, the United Labor Agency, and the Connecticut Department of Labor. The proposal was officially filed by the Connecticut Department of Labor on behalf of the UTC employees.

Larson said, "The thousands of UTC workers who have done so much to support the economy of not only Connecticut, but our nation as well, clearly deserve this assistance from the federal government. The best way that we can help ease the devastation of job loss is by giving people the skills and education they need to re-join the workforce. I am extremely pleased that Secretary Herman has approved this grant for our state's most valuable resource: its workers."

Key features of the grant include:

- Provision of career transition services statewide, fully integrating services offered by One-Stop Centers and others, while offering customized services to hourly and salaried personnel through one or more dedicated centers.

- Maximum utilization and integration of all training resources, including the UTC Employee Scholar Program, training benefits for hourly workers, and state and grant resources.

- A special technology initiative to equip dislocated UTC employees to compete in the high technology economy. Larson also announced today his legislative initiative to develop a federal office to work with communities severely impacted by job layoffs. A pilot project that will begin today with the assistance of federal officials is based on Larson's legislation. Joined by officials from the White House and various federal agencies, Larson noted that the Hartford region is the first community in the country to be selected for the development of such a federal office.

He announced that Cyrena Eitler from the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment has been named as the Project Manager of this pilot project.

When a community is affected by job loss, federal assistance is provided from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, Treasury, and the Small Business Administration, among other agencies. However, no department or agency is presently responsible for coordinating the federal government's community adjustment assistance response, nor providing it in an immediate manner. Therefore, the office created through Larson's bill would operate with a rapid-response, overall coordination that is similar to FEMA's operation during a natural disaster or the Department of Defense's action after a base closure.

"The best way we can help workers and communities deal with job loss and recovery, is providing the assistance they need in the most timely manner. I was very pleased to have introduced this legislation that will go a long way toward helping our state's workers and communities recover from job loss. The federal government is a great resource of information, and the development of this new office will be an additional asset," said Larson.

Larson's bill (H.R. 4711) would establish an Office of Community Economic Adjustment in the Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce to coordinate the federal response in regions and communities experiencing severe and sudden economic distress. It would also help these regions and communities restructure their economies, and increase the funding for community adjustment assistance.

H.R. 4711, which has 163 co-sponsors, is currently before the House Banking and Financial Services Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Representatives from the White House National Economic Council, the Department of Commerce, Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment, Small Business Administration, Housing and Urban Development, Treasury, National Aeronautic and Space Administration, and the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration attended today's announcement in East Hartford, Connecticut.

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